
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VISUAL ILLUSTRATIONS IN INCREASING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN TENTH GRADE AT SMK NU PACE

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Abstract— Visual illustrations represent text or ideas with real and authentic contexts, which can improve students' reading comprehension and attract their interest in learning. The purpose of this study is to analyze significant differences in students' reading comprehension skills before and after being taught using visual illustrations. This study used quantitative method and quasi-experimental design of one group pre-test and post-test. The sample technique used was convenience sampling. Data collection techniques were pre-test and post-test with 10 multiple choice questions. Data analysis techniques using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The results showed that the average pre-test score was 58.1 in the low category and the average post-test was 82.6 in the very good category. Based on the results of the t-test analysis obtained $t_{count} (1.96) > t_{table} (1.683)$. So, H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. The n-gain score of 0.58 (58%) shows the effectiveness of visual illustration in improving students' reading comprehension. Thus, there is a significant difference in student learning outcomes through the use of visual illustration in increasing students' reading comprehension skills in tenth grade at SMK NU Pace in the academic year of 2023/2024.

Keywords-reading comprehension skills, visual illustration, quasi-experiment, quantitative

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language used to communicate around the world. As English has become a universal language used in technology, education, politics, trade, and global communication, the ability to speak English is very important for students. In this modern world full of challenges and fierce competition, everyone is required to have a high level of education and specialized skills. One of the most important skills today is the ability to speak English. According to the explanation above, English is a global language, so someone who wants to be one step ahead of others must even master English

In Indonesia, English is very important. This is evident from its role in education up to university level, making it important to learn English early on. Muttaqien (Nurhidayah, 2020: 1) states schools as formal educational institutions play an important role in preparing competitive generations around the world, especially for Vocational High School (SMK) students who graduate and then continue their education to universities. Based on the basic competency standards at the SMK level. English language skills are intended to support the mastery and development of four English language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (Harmer, 1990 (Murti & Jabu, 2022): 50). Simultaneously, it is expected that learners will acquire broad English language skills.

Although English has become a compulsory subject at school, at SMK NU Pace there are still many students who experience difficulties, especially in reading comprehension skills. Problems that are often faced by students of SMK NU Pace in the English learning process are due to a lack of motivation that makes students think English is difficult and boring, learning methods that do not emphasise the development of skills needed by students, and the lack of interesting and interactive learning media that makes students bored. This is because conventional learning methods that are often used in schools, such as discussions and lectures, are generally less effective in improving students' reading skills. Students often feel bored and unmotivated to learn. These problems need to be addressed to make English learning more effective and efficient. One type of learning that is effective for students in learning is visual illustration, which is media that can only be seen and does not contain sound, including pictures, photos, slide films, painting transparencies, and various forms of printed materials such as graphic media. Visual illustrations is very important for learning activities because it can facilitate understanding and strengthen memory, and can make learning more interesting and fun, so it can increase student interest and motivation to learn. Visual illustrations can also help students remember information for longer because they can relate the information to the images they have seen. The effect of using learning media is very large the success of the teaching and learning process (Maulida Tiya. S, 2022: 23). To be more effective, visuals are placed in a meaningful context and students must interact with the visual (image) to ensure the information process occurs (Sholihah, 2019: 12). Putra and Lakoro (Pujangga, 2022: 7) state the purpose of illustration is to provide explanation or

artistic appearance to stories, poems, written works, or other information. The use of visual illustrations is very effective in students' reading comprehension skills. Reading is a very important skill that must be mastered by everyone.

Mastery of reading skills is one of the important factors for learning success. This is due to the fact that good reading skills are required for almost all subjects taught at school. To perform various English activities, such as reading texts, understanding news, and communicating, good reading skills are required (Mantiri et al., 2019: 2). That reading English can help students learn English. The eyes (vision) and memory are active in reading. Given that eye movements respond to what is read faster than reading silently, reading silently is faster. Therefore, we often use silent reading in our reading or discourse activities every day.

Illustration is an art or visualization result that is produced and illustrates a form of writing, ideas and words in the form of images with several techniques. Among them are painting techniques, photographic images, fine art techniques or other works of art. Illustration is a medium of delivery to explain information that is in the form of text and expressions more easily and quickly, especially to children who are not yet good at reading. Illustration covers a very wide field as well as includes all types of drawings, sketches, photographs, graphs, plans, technical-shaped drawings and others for the context of publishing a book

Illustrations are meant to convey a certain idea or message to a certain person. The purpose of illustration is to provide a visual experience that delivers meaning beyond the ability of words. Illustrations are able to keep readers interested and encourage them to continue reading.

In the English language learning process, illustrations help learners contextualize the language, learn the language in a realistic and authentic way, gain autonomy and involve themselves in learning in a memorable and cognitive way. Illustrated media is considered to be attractive thus increasing student participation. The utilization of visual media in education serves as a catalyst for student motivation and sustained learning. With the use of visual illustrations can stimulate students to have increased student curiosity, foster the desire to acquire knowledge and develop their reading skills (Mindaudah (Mubarok et al., 2023: 4)).

Illustrations can help readers to visualize information, improve focus, enhance memory, and increase interest. Appropriate use of visual illustration in reading texts can help readers to understand information better and achieve their learning goals and enhance learning more effectively, enjoyably, and meaningfully for students. The use of visual illustrations is very effective in students' reading comprehension skills. Reading is a very important skill that must be mastered by everyone. Reading is an interactive process in which readers find and understand the meaning contained in written materials (Pengampu et al., 2019: 3). In addition, reading is a process in which the reader discovers and understands the message conveyed by the author. Reading is an essential skill in learning English. This

skill helps students gain information, increase their vocabulary, and improve their understanding of the English language as a whole. Reading has the main purpose of seeking and obtaining information, which includes understanding its content and meaning. Elliott (Sinabariba & Sinaga, 2020: 3) states defines reading comprehension as the primary goal in all types of reading instruction, meaning that readers not only recognize words, but also understand the concepts represented by those words. Reading a text, understanding it, and then recalling it involves complex strategies (perceptual, linguistic, and conceptual operations) that take years to develop.

This research is very important to do because it aims to find out whether learning with visual illustrations can help students in improving English reading skills, especially in terms of reading comprehension. The challenge to overcome is the low English reading ability of students of SMK NU Pace. Students can improve their reading comprehension skills by using visual illustration learning. Therefore, research on how illustrative visuals can improve students' reading comprehension skills should be conducted so that students of SMK NU Pace can understand and strengthen memories, think sharper and more specifically, and develop new ideas and interests. Students who use effective reading comprehension skills will have better language skills. The maximum results that have been achieved by a student after experiencing the teaching and learning process in studying reading materials do not always contain grades, they get changes in reasoning, discipline, skills, and other traits that can produce useful changes.

Previous research has also been conducted by several other researchers, namely: 1) Nenda Febriani Claudia Sheikh-Yusuf from Tangerang Islamic University entitled "The Effect of Visual Media on Student Reading Comprehension" (Claudia, 2021). The results showed that the use of visual media improved students' reading comprehension. 2) Journal by Jodilly Gallardo, Nicole Dela Cruz, Gloede Opinga, and Femia S. Albino entitled "Visual Learning-Style-Based Activities in Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills of Second-Year English Major Students" (Gallardo et al., 2023). The results showed significant improvement in reading comprehension levels. 3) A journal written by Hapsari Ovina Mantiri, Noldy Pelenkahu, and I. Javier C. Tuerah from the Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, entitled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Picture and Picture" (Mantiri et al., 2019), the results showed that students' scores on the post-test were higher than those on the pre-test, indicating that the approach was effective and 4) In a study titled "The Effect of Visualization Strategy on the Students' Reading Comprehension at SMA Swasta Nurcahaya Medan" by Tanjung Juan Carlos, Madina, and Muhammad Muslim Nasution (Tanjung Juan Carlos, Madina, 2022). The study concluded that visualization strategies significantly improved students' reading comprehension.

Based on the above background, researcher are interested in conducting research on "The Effectiveness of Visual Illustrations in Increasing Students' Reading Comprehension Skills in Tenth

Grade at SMK NU Pace in The Academic Year of 2023/2024". This study aims to improve the reading comprehension skill of tenth grade students of SMK NU Pace. The purpose of this study is to analyze significant differences in students' reading comprehension skills before and after being taught using visual illustrations

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type and design of the research used was quasi-experiment design one group pre-test and post-test. This quasi-experiment was used because there was a situation that made it impossible to use a control class. The population of the generalization area consists of subjects or objects chosen by researchers to study and then come to conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018: 117). The population used is the students of SMK NU Pace in the academic year of 2023-2024. There are a total of six classes. The total population is grade ten as many as 207 students. Sugiyono (2018: 118) states the sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. The sample in this study consisted of 42 students of class X-Accountant SMK NU Pace. The sampling procedure used in this study was nonprobability with convenience sampling technique. Researcher use this sampling method because sampling is easy and practical. The researcher only needs to select respondents who can be willing to participate in the study. This is very beneficial, especially in situations where research time and resources are limited. Data processing results used in this study using two techniques, namely descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Descriptive statistics is used to analyses data or describing the data as it is without making conclusions that can general conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018a: 206). This analysis uses visual illustrations to assess students' reading comprehension skills is mean to determine the students' average score. Standard deviation if the standard deviation of a data set is zero, all values in the set are equal, but if the standard deviation is larger, individual data points are far from the mean value (Mikhail (Hidayat et al., 2019: 50-51)). Inferential statistics is a statistical method used to examine sample data and produce conclusions that apply to the population (Sugiyono, 2018a: 207). The data was analyzed with the t-test formulation as follows:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{N(N-1)}}} \quad (1)$$

N-Gain used method to measure the effectiveness of a learning or intervention in improve learners' learning outcomes (Sukarelawan et al., 2024 : 9)

$$N_{\text{Gain Score}} = \frac{\text{Posttest score} - \text{pretest score}}{\text{Ideal Score} - \text{pretest score}} \times 100\% \quad (2)$$

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted for one day, and the researcher was assisted by the English teacher there to ensure the smoothness of the research. The researcher gave a pre-test with 10 multiple choice questions, then gave the treatment by using visual illustration in learning. After that, the researcher gave a post-test with 10 multiple choice questions that were the same as the pre-test to measure the effectiveness of the use of visual illustrations. The results showed a positive effect of the use of visual illustrations in increasing students' reading comprehension skills, which can be seen from the difference in pre-test and post-test results.

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Result

Test	Average	Category
Pre-test	58.1	Poor
Post-test	82.6	Excellent

The t-test can be seen as follows:

Table 2. T-test Result

Tcount	Df	T tabel	Conclusion
1.96	41	1683	Tcount > Ttable = 1.96 > 1.683.

From the results of the calculation between the pre-test and post-test t count obtained 1.96 and t table of 1683. So that the hypothesis obtained is $H_a \text{ tcount} > \text{ttable} = 1.96 > 1.683$ including accepted.

Table 3. N-gain Result

N Gain Score	N Gain Percentage
0.58	58%

Based on the results of the N-gain score test calculation above, it shows that the average n-gain score in class X Accounting for reading comprehension skills with visual illustrations of 0.58 or 58% is included in the moderately effective category. The classification of the n-gain score of this study is moderate because the index is $0.3 \leq g \leq 0.7 = 0.3 \leq 0.58 \leq 0.7$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of visual illustrations is quite effective in increasing reading comprehension skills of class X Accounting students at SMK NU Pace.

In the first step as a pre-test, some students' reading comprehension skills were below the passing score. Students' reading comprehension skills before being taught using visual illustration in class X SMK NU Pace has a poor category. The average score of students before being taught using visual illustration was 58,1 points. In students' reading comprehension skills before being taught by using visual illustration, the researcher divided 5 indicators namely understand the gist of the text, identify

text based on form and purpose, understanding the implicate meaning, identify the causes and effects of events in the text, and summarising the text. Students were given a test to determine their reading comprehension skills. The total research questions in the pre-test were 10 questions. In the pre-test, the indicators of students' errors were very much done, namely not being able to identify the main idea or important information in the text, students lack the ability to distinguish the characteristics of different types of text and understand the communication purpose of the text, have difficulty in reading between the lines and grasping meanings that are not explicitly stated in the text, difficulty in understanding cause-and-effect relationships in texts, and common errors include including too many details or failing to include important information.

In this second step, the researcher gave the treatment to the students. The treatment here is to give students an academic reading accompanied by visual illustrations. All students were interested to read the text accompanied by visual illustration. The last step is the post-test, students are given a test to determine reading comprehension. The students' reading comprehension skills has a very good category. The average score of students after being taught using visual illustration is 82.6 points. Reading comprehension after being taught by using visual illustration, the researcher divided 5 indicators namely understand the gist of the text, identify text based on form and purpose, understanding the implicate meaning, identify the causes and effects of events in the text, and summarising the text. Students were given a test to determine their reading comprehension skills. The research questions in the pre-test totalled 10 questions. There were few indicators of errors in students' answers in the post-test, which included having little difficulty in reading between the lines and grasping meanings that were not explicitly stated in the text, difficulty in understanding cause-and-effect relationships in the text, common errors including including too many details or failing to include important information.

This study shows that there is a significant difference visual illustrations effective in increasing reading comprehension skills. Visual illustration method is an effective learning strategy to improve students' reading comprehension skills. Visual illustration can help students improve a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the reading material. This way, visual illustration method is proven to be one of the alternative and effective methods in learning reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used a visual illustration in increasing students's reading comprehension skills in tenth grade at SMK NU Pace in the academic year of 2023/2024. The researcher concluded this study based on the research questions: 1) The students' reading comprehension skills before being taught by using visual illustrations in class X SMK NU Pace in the academic year 2023/2024 was categorised as poor. This is evidenced from the average value of the pre-test. The pre-test mean research result is 58.1 points. 2) The students' reading comprehension skills after being taught using visual illustrations in class X

SMK NU Pace in the academic year 2023/2024 is categorised in the excellent category. This is evidenced from the average value of the post-test. The average post-test result was 82.6 points. 3) The effectiveness of students' reading comprehension skills before and after being taught by using visual illustration. Based on the data analysis where this research is to find out the significant difference of the use of visual illustration in increasing students' reading comprehension skills, the t_{count} is 1.96 and t_{table} is 1.683. Then $t_{count} > t_{table} = 1.96 > 1.683$, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) which states $t_{count} < t_{table}$ is not significant, so H_0 is rejected. Then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) that $t_{count} > t_{table}$ will be significant, so H_a is accepted. There is a significant difference before and after being taught with visual illustration method on reading comprehension skills of tenth grade students of SMK NU Pace in the academic year 2023/2024. So that the use of visual illustration in students' reading comprehension skills is quite effective in learning which is 0.58 or 58%.

Based on the results of the research and discussion, the recommendations that can be taken are as follows the following: 1) Learning methods or strategies used in learning activities must be in accordance with the material being taught because it can affect success and benefits for students in learning. 2) Teachers create a self-learning system for students, so that they are more courageous in voice their opinions during lessons and have no trouble dealing with problems that arise in everyday life. The school should pay more attention to the available facilities and complete them. The school should pay more attention to the available facilities and complete them to increase the students' students' enthusiasm for learning. 3) Students should realise that learning English, especially reading comprehension skills, can be fun and easy. The researcher hopes that the students motivated to improve their skills and self-confidence in learning English. 4) The researchers hopes that the results of this study can be used as a guide for future researchers who will come.

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